

low key is naturally adapted to the expression of solemnity, reverence, awe, fear, or sadness, when under the influence of any depressing passion. The *high* key is used in calling a person at a distance, or when the speaker is under the influence of strong passion, as in levity, joy, boldness, anger. The *middle* key is adapted to simple narrative, and is used to express ordinary thought and moderate emotion. Any continued address in the same tone should be avoided.

RULE I.—*Let the reader or speaker choose that key-note most natural and easy to himself, and above and below which he has most room for variation.*

RULE II.—*Avoid monotony or the continuation of the same tone throughout the sentence.* This is one of the greatest and most common faults in elocution.

It is proper to remark, however, that sometimes sentences occur that require a violation of this rule ; as the following from Job, "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake."

RULE III.—*Avoid an abrupt transition from a low to a high pitch when the language and sentiment do not warrant it.*

There is sometimes a regular sort of variation which has no connection with the sense. A sentence is commenced vehemently, and then the voice tapers down word by word till it reaches an almost inaudible pitch. A similar fault is often seen in the *sing-song* habit so common in reading poetry, where the variation has no reference to the sense.

RULE IV.—*The tones of the voice should always correspond with the nature of the subject.* Thus, *persuasion* requires soft insinuating tones ; *commands*, full and strong tones ; *anger*, harsh, irregular, and sometimes grating tones ; *pity* and *sorrow*, soft and plaintive tones.

All the errors in tone which have been mentioned will be avoided, if the reader, guided by the *sense*, gives that *emphasis*, *inflection*, and *expression* which are necessary to bring out the full meaning of his author.

The human voice is susceptible of almost unlimited improvement, in strength, compass, and flexibility. And the student must, if he would become perfect in the art of elocution, give it that time and attention which its importance demands.

INFLECTION.

Inflections are the bendings or slides of the voice upward or downward in reading or speaking.

There are two inflections, the *rising*, marked (´) ; as, Did you speak' ? And the *falling*, marked (`) ; as, I did speak`. Sometimes both these inflections occur in the same question ; as, Will you go' or stay` ? In general, the rising inflection denotes that the sense is incomplete ; the falling, that it is complete. These slides may be exhibited in writing